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Items of information needed by students in student teaching program were based on opinions of student teachers, recent graduates, and other professional people, and on a thorough survey of the literature related to student teaching.

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THE DETERMINATION OF PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY PERSONNEL TO BE INCLUDED IN A MANUAL FOR STUDENT TEACHING

- Richard Marion Wilson -

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The Problem and Its Importance

The main purpose of this study was to determine what items of information were needed by students in their student teaching program. Minor problems involved were: (1) Obtaining expressions of opinion about the student teaching program at Mansfield State Teachers College, and needs related to it from student teachers and recent graduates; (2) A survey of professional literature to glean information related to student teaching which might be relevant to a manual for student teaching; (3) To compare opinions of the products of Mansfield State Teachers College with those of other professional people; (4) An analysis of the data secured and translation of it into a list of information items needed in a manual for student teaching.

A survey of educational literature and contacts with persons engaged in teacher education revealed the importance of continuing study relative to the development of student teaching manuals and their worth. There seemed to be a consensus of opinion that student teaching is the most important phase of the professional preparation of teachers, therefore, any vehicle which would improve or strengthen the teacher's readiness for the initial teaching position would justify its existance. A manual for student teaching, developed with the aid of people participating in and concerned about student teaching, should fill the gaps in professional information for the student teacher and serve as a guide in the absence of the supervisor.

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Procedure

A thorough survey of the literature related to student teaching was made. The purposes of this survey were two-fold: (1) To reveal investigations already completed that related to this study; (2) To collect professional information which would bring some pertinent factors in teacher education programs into prominent focus.

Data for the study were gathered by a questionnaire survey of 526 student teachers and recent graduates of the Mansfield State Teachers College, a random sampling of 184 members of the Association of Student Teaching, and sixteen Directors of Student Teaching in the State Teachers Colleges of Pennsylvania.

Findings

An analysis of the responses from student teachers and recent graduates of the Mansfield State Teachers College, members of The Association for Student Teaching, and Directors of Student Teaching in the State Teachers Colleges of Pennsylvania revealed that two or more of the participating groups expressed no significant disagreement on the following items of information:

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1. A historical sketch and an administrative outline of the school in which the teaching is to be done;

2. The philosophy of the school relative to the child, the student teacher, the supervisor, the curriculum;

3. Regulations covering routine school procedures;

4. How the assignment to student teaching is made, by whom, how long, to whom, where;

5. The realtionship of supervisor and student teacher;

6. Responsibilities of the supervisor;

7. Responsibilities of the student teacher;

8. How to get off to a good start in student teaching;

9. Desirable facts about classroom housekeeping;

10. A list of principles of good teaching;

11. Plans for handling materials and equipment;

12. How to plan and organize classroom activities;

13. The place of discipline in the classroom;

14. The effect of physical condition on learning;

15. Relationship of personality traits to teaching;

16. Points about individual differences;

17. How to profit by observing other teachers at work.

18. The placement service of the college;

19. A code of ethics;

20. The relationship of the teacher to professional organizations.

It was concluded, therefore, that these items of information were needed by students in their student teaching program and should prove valuable in a manual for student teaching.

Conclusions

Several conclusions seemed to be in harmony with the data of this study. They were:

1. This study determined the items of information needed by students in their student teaching program and which should be included in a manual for student teaching.

2. A continuous program of cooperative evaluation of the student teaching experience would do much to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the present program and offer an opportunity for the teacher education institution to strengthen the weak points.

3. Student teachers and graduates of the Mansfield State Teachers College were not satisfied with the piecemeal procedure under which student teaching is now carried out. The practice offers little opportunity for the prospective teacher to gain the proper perspective of the complete job of teaching. A need for a "full-time teaching experience was indicated.

4. There is agreement among student teachers, recent graduates of the student teaching program, and professional educators that there should be a manual for student teaching in an institution operating a student teaching program.

5. A manual for student teaching should vary from institution to institution. It should be in accordance with local needs and conditions.

6. The information to be contained in a manual should not be arbitrary but developed in accord with established needs.

7. The manual should be a positive adjunct to the professional education program.

8. The manual should be concise, definite and available for constant use if it is to be of value to persons concerned in the teacher education program.

9. A manual should be developed in a cooperative manner. It should be an institutional product.

10. Use of the manual should not be limited to the period of student teaching. If it is an institutional product, it should have use before and after, as well as during, student teaching. Some persons feel it should be placed in the hands of students as early as their freshman year.

11. A manual for student teaching at the Mansfield State Teachers College would be a welcome addition to the professional program by student teachers and supervisors.

Recommendation

"Self-evaluation" has become a rather accepted expression in education. Because of the employment of democratic teaching techniques in our

schools, it is imperative that similar practices be followed in the professional preparation of teachers. There is need for more research in the development of professional programs and phases of such by cooperative means and development of techniques and procedures for carrying on this type of evaluation. Progress has been made but there is need for continuing study.